

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

TRSE-00 EURE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 /064 W

----- 091921

P R 021640Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8180

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION GROUPS AGREE TENTATIVELY ON 10-MEMBER

NEGOTIATING

TEAM TO MEET WITH SUAREZ

REF: MADRID 9028

1. AT THEIR SCHEDULED FOLLOW-UP MEETING YESTERDAY (REFTEL),
OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, SOCIALISTS,
COMMUNISTS, LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, AND REGIONAL COALITIONS AGREED
TO FORM A 10 MEMBER NEGOTIATING TEAM MADE UP OF ONE LIBERAL,
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ONE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT, ONE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT, TWO SOCIALISTS,

ONE COMMUNIST, ONE REPRESENTATIVE EACH FROM CATALONIA, THE BASQUE PROVINCES AND GALICIA, AND, SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT AMONG THE LABOR GROUPS, ONE LABOR REPRESENTATIVE. EACH POLITICAL "FAMILY" INVOLVED WILL NOW DECIDE ON ITS REPRESENTATIVE(S) AND A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IS EXPECTED ON SATURDAY.

2. TWENTY-TWO OF THE GROUPS REPRESENTED APPROVED THIS FORMAT OUTRIGHT, WHILE FOURTEEN OTHERS, PRINCIPALLY THE LIBERALS, THREE MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "EQUIP," AND ALL OF THE FAR LEFT GROUPS "RESERVED" THEIR FINAL DECISION UNTIL SATURDAY. THE LIBERALS REPORTEDLY HAD SOUGHT MORE THAN ONE REPRESENTATIVE, WHILE THE FAR LEFT MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT CANNOT BE REPRESENTED BY THE PCE. THE INITIAL RELUCTANCE OF THE THREE "EQUIPO" MEMBERS PROBABLY DERIVES FROM THE DIFFICULTY IN AGREEING ON A SINGLE CD REPRESENTATIVE. IF THE LIBERALS AND ALL THE "EQUIPO" MEMBERS FAIL TO COME ALONG., THE ARRANGEMENT COULD UNRAVEL, ALTHOUGH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER JAIME CORTEZO HAS TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE ANTICIPATES NO PROBLEMS IN THIS REGARD. AS WAS THE CASE AT THE SATURDAY MEETING, PARTIDO POPULAR, THE "SOCIALIST DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE" (PSOE "HISTORICOS," PSDE, RSE), AND THOSE REGIONAL COALITIONS NOT INVOLVED IN THE "PLATAFORMA DE ORGANISMOS DEMOCRATICOS" (POD) DID NOT PARTICIPATE.

3. YESTERDAY'S AGREEMENT LEAVES A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS UNANSWERED. PRINCIPAL AMONG THEM IS HOW THE PROBLEM POSED BY COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION ON THE NEGOTIATING TEAM WILL BE RESOLVED, GIVEN THE GOVT'S CONTINUING INDICATIONS THAT IT DOES NOT INTEND TO SIT DOWN AT THE TABLE WITH THE PCE. ONE WAY AROUND THIS WOULD BE FOR THE TEAM TO SELECT A SMALLER GROUP --PERHAPS THREE OR FOUR REPRESENTATIVES, NONE OF THEM PCE MEMBERS -- TO ACTUALLY MEET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WHO, IN ANY CASE, HAS ALREADY EXPRESSED, AS CORTEZO CONFIRMS, HIS PERSONAL PREFERENCE THAT THE GROUP BE AS SMALL AS POSSIBLE. STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT, PRIME MINISTER, OPPOSITION PARTIES, MEETING DELEGATIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, FORM OF GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID09137
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760446-0860
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761279/aaaacqmh.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MADRID 9028
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPPOSITION GROUPS AGREE TENTATIVELY ON 10-MEMBER NEGOTIATING TEAM TO MEET WITH SUAREZ
TAGS: PINT, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006